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ABSTRACT

Rooted in the philosophy of John Dewey and the work of Kurt Hahn, experiential education is a process of whole person education based on active participation by the learner in the learning situation. As professionals committed to student development, student personnel administrators are particularly well-suited philosophically and institutionally to implement an experiential learning program. They command a variety of resources and can accommodate experimental efforts more readily than other university entities. A student affairs experiential learning center (ELC) could, for example, offer outdoor and survival education, cultural journalism, craftsmanship, and/or a variety of avocational leisure-time activities, as well as volunteer service learning activities. The student center is especially well-suited to house an experiential program, for it already has the facilities needed in an ELC program, an adaptable staff, and great campus visibility. Development of a student affairs ELC must include open communication with other groups and agencies and an interdisciplinary approach that encourages cooperation rather than competition. Provision also must be made for insurance to cover ELC staff, student center, and the university. Evaluation is essential to the program's credibility and its ability to learn from experience. Elements subject to evaluation include individual student outcomes (satisfaction and personal growth), teacher outcomes (personal and instructional development), and program outcomes (effectiveness in terms of the target population). (JC)

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AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER: A NEW APPROACH IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING

Submitted as partial fulfillment of
degree requirements for
MASTER OF EDUCATION
to:

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Ruth Bradford Burnham
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POSITION PAPER

AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER: A NEW APPROACH IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING

THE POSITION

An Experiential Learning Center (ELC) is a desirable programming vehicle for educational and recreational activities complementary to traditional in-class learning environments and programs. The Student Affairs Division is a logical, practical, philosophically defensible home for such a Center.

INTRODUCTION

This position makes some assumptions that will be explained, defined, and otherwise clarified through the rest of this paper. We are dealing, first of all, with something other than "traditional in-class learning environments and programs." This implies a definition of experiential learning that makes it non-traditional, and outside of the regular classroom. The program to be described here is also intended to be complementary to the more traditional, structured learning environments. This means "in addition to" not "opposed to" and not "alternative to". Though the Student Affairs Division has long had a student service orientation, it has also developed a program orientation, and there is support for an educative function for Student Affairs; a greater and more widely-reaching concern for student development. An Experiential Learning Center can fit neatly into the student personnel function of enhancing the out-of-class life of students as well as including an educational component in that effort. Richard Kraft

(1976, p. 2) of the University of Colorado has said that "To colleges, /experiential education/ is a peripheral activity, much like ethnic or women's studies, to be given a place for those who want to do it, but not to be taken too seriously." At least experiential education can be given a place, a chance to make its contribution. It is not the only alternative to traditional learning environments, but it certainly can be a component of the programming that has as its base the holistic concern of the student personnel profession for students. Those who want to do it will, those who might want to do it should have the opportunity to find out about it, and those who don't want to do it won't, and shouldn't be made to. Experiential learning is not necessarily the ultimate in educational programming. Viewed in this way, it could be in danger of either joining the list of "dead" movements, or maybe worse, becoming a self-perpetuating organization, ritualizing its programs and losing touch with the excitement of challenge, change, and growth. But it should be taken seriously enough to be considered for its potential and applications to today's systems of higher education.

Some questions raised here, then, include Just what is "experjential education?" Where did it come from? What makes it important today? What is the rationale for developing an Experiential Learning Center? How does it tie in with student personnel functions? What kinds of programs can be part of an ELC? Where should such a program be housed, and why? Are there any problems or limitations to be aware of in setting up and running such a program? Criticisms? What about assessment and evaluation--how do you know if you're doing what you set out to do? What about the future?

The following exploration of experiential education will attempt to deal with these questions, while very likely uncovering others to be answered through the experience of developing and presenting the program itself.

Just what is Experiential Education?

Discussion of experiential learning is difficult without a definition, or at least a feel for what is meant by the term. A variety of somewhat synonymous or related terms appears in the literature: discovery, action-oriented, non-vicarious, self-directed, or extra-classroom learning are some of these. An appealing term/concept arising from a "Dialogue on Experiential Education" at the Colorado Outward Bound School in January 1977 is that of "whole person education", which implies a stronger value orientation toward development of body, mind, and emotions (Nold, p. 7).

Strictly speaking, there is really no education that is not experiential education. "Even the most vicarious of activities is an experience for the learner, especially if Webster's definition 'facts or events or the totality of facts or events observed' is used" (Gager 1976, p. 7). For the purposes of this discussion, however, experiential learning is generally learning as it occurs outside of traditional classroom settings, involving some "interaction between the learner and what is learned" (Dewey 1938, p. x). It is learning with an active rather than passive component, and learning which emphasizes outcomes for the individual:

> A learning experience which frees an individual for making and living his own choices--about whether to learn, what to learn, and how to learn--ultimately results in a more capable and responsible person. One moves from dependence to independence. (Medrick, undated, p. 4)

> the learning that occurs when changes in judgments, feelings, knowledge, or skills result for a particular person from living through an event or events (Keeton 1976, p. 63).

Experiential learning can refer to two types of learning. One is referred to as "learning through life experience, prior learning, or nonsponsored learning"--learning that is acquired through experience independent of an educational institution.

> A second broad category of experiential learning, generally called sponsored learning, is that incorporated in institutionally sponsored programs that are designed to give students more direct experience in integrating and applying knowledge. . . .In both instances, it is important to understand that the learning or competence that is acquired must be relevant to student and institutional objectives (Keeton, p. 225).

It is sponsored experiential learning, then, that is of concern here. And for educators, those who structure the opportunities for learning, there are concepts, in addition to these definitions, which should be kept in mind in order to make the presentation of offerings most effective. Instructional and programming efforts should be based on "a learning model that requires students to pursue or apply their acquired skills through direct involvement in non-classroom settings" (Gager, p. 5). Experience alone is no guarantor of learning. The responsibility of the program leaders is to plan and provide the opportunity to learn and allow others to react, respond, grow, change to whatever extent they are willing and able. As John Dewey pointed out in Experience and Education (1938, pp. 16-17), "Everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had. . . .Hence, the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences." He goes on to say (p. 35):

> A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile.

With creativity, the resources at hand can be used to provide a program of good quality to all members of the university community. For the time being, except in the case of special, cooperative projects, these offerings will not carry academic credit.

Where did it come from?

A group was formed in 1977, with its first major organizational meeting held late in the year in California, and it chose as its name the "Association for Experiential Education." While the California meeting was the fifth conference devoted to the general topic of experiential education held by some combination of the organization's founders, November 1977 saw a national organization emerge, with its goal the furtherance of this idea across the country in the years to come.

Is "experiential education" a new idea? A fad sweeping the education field like new math or teaching machines or encounter groups? Is it a return of the manual labor movement of the 1800's? Or is it a reasonable response to the social, economic, historic, scientific/technological, and political events which have combined to present us with the current state-of-the-educational-art?

Harold Howe II, Vice President for Education and Research for the Ford Foundation told the 1974 Conference on Experiential Education in Estes Park, that as far as he knew "experiential education started with Adam and Eve and has been going on ever since" (p. 4). Certainly, we can find reasonable examples of it throughout history, from the Chinese development of examinations for leadership in the national public service starting approximately 4,000 years ago and continuing until 1905 (Parelius & Parelius 1978, pp. 36-37), to the hundreds of programs we have today like Foxfire, Outward Bound, the Apprenticeshop in Bath, Maine, and many more. In Plato's Meno, Socrates depended on experiential education to aid him in bringing the uneducated slave boy to an understanding of the Pythagorean theorem (Keeton, p. 20).

In 1268, Roger Bacon said:

> There are two modes of knowing, through argument and experience. Argument brings conclusions and compels us to concede them, but does not cause certainty nor remove doubts in order that the mind may remain at rest in truth, unless this is provided by experience (Ornstein 1972, p. 63).

A little later, we see three major systems of learning stemming from the middle ages which were highly experiential in nature. The apprenticeship system practiced by the craft guilds was "based at every level upon experiential learning of the most immediate and practical kind and therefore differed very sharply from the teaching of the university" (Keeton, p. 22). The university at this time stressed the mastery by the student of content of books and lectures, but not any sort of empirical knowledge based on close involvement and induction from experience. The stark competency testing of the knights of chivalry in battles and tournaments was clear demand for skills developed experientially. If experiential education is defined to include self-directed study, even monasteries, courts, and private libraries made their own contributions to the field in medieval times.

Compressing history a great deal, nations grew from city-states, professional military services replaced nobleman/warriors, industrial society grew out of feudal home industries, demand increased for more sophisticated clergy, literacy became more widespread, and universities flourished. By the 1800's, though, universities, whose purposes and programs had remained fairly constant, were faced by some new challenges. They were asked to take on the task of providing knowledge once offered by other systems. Modern warfare, new engineering, agricultural, and technical professions, and institutionally complex religion needed an instructional home; one that combined systematic instruction and

experiential learning. One of the first calls for this combination came from John Stuart Mill in 1867 in his inaugural address as Rector of St. Andrews University in Scotland (Keeton, p. 27):

> /Education includes not only/ whatever we do for ourselves, and whatever is done for us by others, for the express purpose of bringing us somewhat nearer to the perfection of our nature; it does more: in its largest acceptation, it comprehends even the indirect effects produced on character and on the human faculties, by things of which the direct purposes are quite different; by laws, by forms of government, by the industrial arts, by modes of social life; nay, even by physical facts not dependent on human will; by climate, soil, and local position. Whatever helps to shape the human being--to make the individual what he is, or hinder him from being what he is not--is part of his education.

Mill went on to suggest that modern foreign languages are much more readily learned by living in the countries where they are spoken; that courses were not needed in general literature and history, since they were written to be read by the individual reader, while subjects requiring more sophisticated analysis as in comparative literature should be taught more systematically. He then applied the same distinctions to the rest of the traditional curriculum, identifying areas of greater and lesser experiential applications.

In the United States, the 1850's brought widespread debate over whether practical subjects should be included in the curriculum. Francis Wayland of Brown University and Ezra Cornell and the Morrill Acts made it clear that the answer was yes, but what and how continued to be problematic. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy had begun the process at their founding in the early 1800's through their commitment to applied science. Harvard and Yale followed suit in the mid-1840's, founding what became the Lawrence and Sheffield Scientific Schools. The traditional colleges were still under fire from professors like New York University's John William Draper, who felt that there was no market

for classically educated youth. "Mere literary acumen is becoming utterly powerless against profound scientific attainment. To what are the great advances of civilization for the last fifty years due--to literature or science? Which of the two is it that is shaping the thought of the world? (Rudolph 1962, p. 236) Questions society and education face today as well--perhaps even more urgently.

A Harvard student, Henry David Thoreau, asked (Rudolph, p. 237):

> How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living? Methinks this would exercise their minds as much as mathematics. . . .Which would have advanced the most at the end of a month,--the boy who had made his own jackknife from the ore which he had dug and smelted, reading as much as would be necessary for this,--or the boy who had attended the lecture on metallurgy at the Institute in the meanwhile, and had received a . . . penknife from his father? Which would be most likely to cut his fingers?. . . To my astonishment I was informed on leaving college that I had studied navigation!--why, if I had taken one turn down the Harbour I should have known more about it.

In 1877, a professor at Amherst who had his students dissecting and studying the clam was relieved of his teaching duties for so doing, but by 1890 a professor at Brown literally "threw aside 'the stuffed walrus and the stuffed giraffe of the old natural history tradition. . .and set the students down at the dissecting table'" (Rudolph, p. 247).

Probably the greatest advance for experience-oriented, practical education in the United States came with the passage of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. While the zeal of the A&M schools sometimes caused them to overemphasize the practical and ignore the cultural and classical, the emergence of Cornell University in 1869 signalled the arrival of a spirit of scholarship that united practical and liberal learning. Overall reigned the old collegiate purpose of developing the individual in the fullest sense, preparing him or her for a useful role in society (Rudolph, p. 268).

Based on Johns Hopkins University's emphasis on the practical applications of knowledge, "in profession after profession, the practicum or guided simulation became essential, though it might be called practice teaching, moot court, field work or some other similar term" (Keeton, p. 30). Since World War II, that old collegiate purpose has been kept at hand, and the commitment has been increasingly made to educate students to deal with the normal conditions of life, in addition to the traditional, practical, and problem-solving curriculum orientations. And probably the most clearly identifiable "normal" condition of life today is that of change. The skills and knowledge that people want have become vastly complex. In addition, the rate of change in what is known and in what people need to know has become so rapid that even the specialists now necessary to help people find out what they need to know find it difficult to keep up to date. So what does the old idea of experiential education have to do with the new demands of change?

What makes experiential education important today?

Learning through experience alone is admittedly a slower, less efficient process than exposure to the various disciplines through the concentrated classroom transmission of information. This hardly seems useful, having just stressed the need for quick assimilation of information in order to cope with the changes all around us. There are some things, about which more will be said later, that cannot be taught or effectively learned in the traditional classroom. Today's institutions of higher education have become centers for learning certain things via efficient, usually vicarious teaching/learning modes. Because we cannot learn everything by doing it, we learn about it and specialize, making choices and judgments along the way which include some and exclude other learning possibilities and experiences.

There is increasing recognition today, however, that some things that are of value for people to know or to deal with are not a part of the usual university offering--regardless of the stated purposes of the University (values/morals education is one such area receiving attention today). Some things that people used to learn at home or out-of-doors are not learned early on for reasons that range from social and economic change to television to urban or sub-urbanization to, oddly enough, the inroads that mandatory schooling makes on today's youth and their time. On the other hand, some things that people probably ought to know that aren't part of the traditional curriculum simply weren't known before, and can best be learned by experiencing them: the effects of an oil spill on a beach, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, the applications of biofeedback, microwave cooking, the effects of air pollution on a redwood tree. . . As in the 1800's, universities are again being challenged to deal with knowledge either previously available elsewhere, or simply never before available at all.

Let's take another look at that idea of time spent in school making a difference in the need for experiential education. Harold Howe (1974,p.7) provides some interesting data for comparison of educational patterns today with those of roughly 100 years ago--a relatively short time for such rapid and thoroughgoing change to have taken place:

> In 1870 less than 5% of the high school age group was in school and most of it was working. Today about 90% is in school. Over the same period schools have increased their sessions from an annual average of 130 days to 180 days. In 1870 some 40% of the students who were enrolled in school didn't attend. They were working or truant or helping out at home or sick or otherwise unaccounted for. Many were probably fishing. Today about 9% of high school pupils are regularly absent on these or other pursuits. I have a feeling that a revealing comparative study could be made of the truancy activities of 1870 adolescents and those in 1970.

All this time spent in school means that most of these students are not working (or fishing) and virtually the only adults they are associating with are their teachers. Our society segregates the young and the old, with the result that each group tends to form its own culture, erecting barriers in the process that at the very least inhibit communication, and more often block it entirely, thereby closing off what people like Eliot Wigginton in the Foxfire project have found can be a rich avenue of learning and cultural exchange. Another effect of all the time spent in school is that while experiences are certainly had there, do we know that these are the most important experiences to have? Could some experiences in the so-called "real world" outside the schools and colleges do more for people? As mentioned before, aren't there some experiences that cannot be arranged in a classroom but that have value for people's education? Climbing a mountain? Encountering flowers and animals and trees in their natural habitats? Repairing an automobile? Understanding the problems of elderly people confined to nursing homes?

Besides practical pursuits, what does all this education do to creativity? Formalized education affects the kinds of experiences and knowledge permitted to children and young adults. Decisions are made about what is proper to teach, permissible to experience, and teachers are generally made nervous by play, by perspectives unlike their own. To paraphrase Bob Samples in The Metaphoric Mind (1976, p. 75), teachers are made anxious when students move away from the structures the teachers have chosen to accept. When that happens, given that the teacher has a good deal of power in the classroom, we can imagine the fate of creativity. "If I criticize others for re-inventing the wheel I am probably more interested in wheels. . . than invention"(Samples, p. 102). Much has been written on this aspect of

education's effects of young people (Bigge, 1964; Borton, 1970; Fantini, 1976; Leonard, 1968; Pirsig, 1974). Mentioning it here can at least provoke some thought.

Experiential education has an interesting place in today's educational chronology. Learning by doing is heavily emphasized in the early years of schooling. Many class trips, games, experiments, structured experiences designed to demonstrate certain principles, evoke certain responses, teach certain concepts. Early childhood is also a time when a great degree of verbal facility is not expected. Children can't be expected to learn the same concepts by having them explained to them. Abstract thinking is not strongly developed. The proportion of experience-based learning steadily decreases in the curriculum as verbal ability is presumed to increase--until we get to the other end of the continuum! Those seeking to obtain advanced degrees find a heavy emphasis once again on gaining experience in order to achieve the needed level of expertise in their specialties. Has abstract thinking at this point become so highly developed that experience must once again be required in order to deal with the "real world"?

So, why is experiential education important today? For learning skills to cope with the world of work. For learning skills to cope with the increasing world of leisure. For learning skills to cope with the technology of the home. For self-development--identity, values, goals, self-knowledge. For learning skills to cope with the environment. For learning, or re-learning about creativity. For cutting through age and culture barriers to bring people closer together. For a great number of things that don't seem to be anywhere else at this point. The why of experiential education necessarily leads us to a discussion of its priorities, goals, and objectives. What follows is an adaptation of a publication from the Colorado Outward Bound School, by

Rick Medrick, entitled "Outward Bound and Higher Education--A Rationale and Outline for College Development" (undated). Since the Outward Bound program, launched by Kurt Hahn in 1941 at Aberdovey, Wales, is generally considered the contemporary parent of experiential education, much of what it says about itself is fully applicable to the kind of program being considered here.

What is the rationale for developing an Experiential Learning Center?

A. Personal and Institutional Priorities

1. These personal goals and their potential for realization seem important for individuals. They're worth keeping in mind as we work with college students:

   a. Enhancing Self-Concept. Identification of personal capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses, and finding ways to improve.

   b. Recognizing Individual Needs. Distinguishing between needs that others can meet, and needs for which one must accept responsibility and take initiative.

   c. Clarifying Personal Values and Directions. Searching for a focus for personal values, and finding a meaningful and acceptable lifestyle.

   d. Coping with Stress and Ambiguity. Developing a capacity to relate internal stress to external pressures and finding the resources to preserve personal equilibrium amidst outward confusion and disorder.

   e. Improving Interpersonal Relations. Establishing a basis for trust in others and clarifying limits and terms for confrontation and interaction.

f. Finding Community and Commonality. Discovering common ground with others that provides for sense of family and community where sharing and cooperation can be seen to have concrete benefits.

2. These goals coincide with concerns typically felt by institutions. Some of these include:

a. Alternative Approaches to Learning. The desire to find alternative forms of education which meet the differing needs and capabilities of various students.

b. Experiential Opportunities. Recognition of the need to provide more practical life training to complement the increasing depth and specialization of classroom learning.

c. Student Responsibility. Encouraging and permitting students to assume some responsibility for their own learning and intellectual values.

d. Student Commitment and Participation. Providing an antidote for student dissociation from campus and societal problems which require creative brainstorming and cooperative effort to bring to solution.

e. Campus Orientation. Providing students with a sense of their place in the campus community and creating a basis for dialogue between students, faculty and administration.

f. Institutional Needs. Communicating to students the pressures and strictures under which most institutions struggle today and the limits necessary to sustain a viable community.

B. Goals and Objectives of an Experiential Learning Center.

1. The following are some of the goals toward which the ELC is directed:

a. Personal Development. Extending self-awareness through identifying personal limits, clarifying needs and goals, recognizing place in society and world, and acknowledging responsibility for self and others.

b. Interpersonal Effectiveness. Expanding capacity for responding to others, achieving open and effective communications, and constructing cooperative, sharing and supportive relationships around common projects, involvements or commitments.

c. Environmental Awareness. Enhancing ability to perceive and identify with one's living environment in a holistic manner that generates concern and commitment for its continued development and preservation.

d. Experiential Learning. Creating and maintaining an environment and an attitude where the emphasis is on experimentation and participation in action-oriented forms of learning. Providing training in those skills essential to effective functioning in a variety of situations.

e. Values Clarification. Providing an experiential setting or focus around which individuals can test and refine personal values in a supportive yet critical framework of peers and others.

f. Philosophy and Life Styles. Stimulating individuals and groups to explore those issues and attitudes which condition their responses and confront the notions proposed by significant

thinkers as a means of identifying personal life styles and beliefs.

2. The following are some components of the process through which the ELC seeks to implement the above goals:

   a. Skills Training. Developing those skills which enable an individual to function with competence and safety in a particular environment.

   b. Physical Challenge. Enabling an individual to explore her individual physical capabilities and limitations at a pace that is both graduated and adjusted to the needs and abilities of the student; i.e. backpacking, expeditions, marathon, exercise programs.

   c. Problem-Solving. Providing opportunities where individuals or groups need to analyze given situations and arrive at solutions that require teamwork, decision making and resolving leadership differences.

   d. Self-Actualization. Creating situations in which an individual has the opportunity to strive for and attain goals which reinforce his self-concept and redefine his capabilities.

   e. Reflection. Stimulating individuals to reflect on styles of individual functioning, methods of relating and personal attitudes in ways that stimulate new insight and provide opportunity for constructive retraining.

   f. Evaluation. Encouraging critical assessment and constructive action in correcting or supporting growth and change.

   g. Service. Developing a sense of responsibility for others and to the environment through work projects, community involvement, etc.

Some threads running through this rationale are worth drawing out. 1) There is a great deal of concern for the individual--what s/he puts into the program and what s/he gets out of it. Personal development, with all its attendant implications and needs, is what we are always dealing with. 2) Cooperation and sense of community are values for this program. People on a productive track of personal development will be better, more able, members of the human family. 3) Learning these values for oneself is an active, participative process. Whether it is conquering a mountain or discovering an aptitude for stitchery, or adding backgammon to one's recreational repertoire, the learning requires involvement and action--Dewey's interaction between the learner and what is learned. 4) Individuals have a responsibility to the world around them. This ranges from understanding the needs of the educational institution and its surrounding community in relation to the student, to understanding man's place in nature and his duty toward the environment. 5) It is important to identify values; to have and use them as a part of living.

Realistically, as we develop an ELC, we will be better able to implement certain of these goals than others--some sooner than others, some more completely than others. But, they are all worth remembering and striving for.

Within what context are these goals to be implemented? Who is the "we" who serve as the agents of development? In this discussion it is the university's Student Affairs Division, and there are some defensible, almost self-evident, reasons for this placement.

How does an ELC tie in with student personnel functions?

A review of the rationale for developing an experiential learning center will point up a high degree of correspondence between the aims and objectives of an ELC and the traditional philosophy of the student personnel profession. There is ample support in the literature and in our professional experience, notably from E.G. Williamson (1961) and Robert D. Brown (1972). Williamson discusses "a point of view concerning students" in which he stresses five major aspects of the relationship between student affairs professionals and the students they serve. The first is our "holistic" view of our clientele: "our central concern with all aspects of the development of human individuality" (p. 13). The intellect should not be the sole concern of higher education. However, when intellect, i.e., the academic areas, is considered, it need not necessarily be left wholly to the traditional teaching faculty. The ties of student personnel to academe are growing (Brown, 1972; Thomas, 1977). Teaching activities enhance the ability of student personnel workers to relate to student needs and interests; and student personnel professionals are increasingly entering the field with special expertise to offer to complement academic programs in a variety of areas. A more mundane consideration is that greater contributions by student personnel to the total university program increases the profession's credibility and insures a more secure future in the face of economic pressures to reduce services and personnel.

Williamson's second point (p. 14) concerns "the unique individuality of each student." While this may be a hold-over from the old in loco parentis philosophy, it is a view consistent with the first, and a counterbalance to today's tendencies in some areas toward mass education and standardization of programs. As does the first point, this one also dovetails well with the ELC rationale stated earlier.

The third, fourth, and fifth of Williamson's aspects need only to be stated to see their relevance to an experiential learning program as presented here (pp. 15-16): "teaching in the classroom is not enough, or sufficient, in the education of some students." It is easy today to make an argument for the assertion that teaching in the classroom is very likely not enough in the education of virtually all students--there is some way that auxiliary programs can benefit all comers. The fourth point concerns "the use of methods and relationships of an educative rather than an authoritarian or chain-of-command type." This idea supports more active participation of students in relation to the college. "Possibly, . . . personnel services can be reorganized so the students do not receive services, but instead actively participate in managing services for their own development." This would certainly qualify as experiential learning--a cadre of paraprofessionals learning and working to aid in the delivery of student services.

Finally, Williamson recommends "the incorporation into services of new knowledge of human nature and its development." A good deal of the literature available deals with the issues of developmental change through experiential learning (Chickering in Keeton, pp. 62-107, for example). Continuing study of experiential learning programs is making contributions to our knowledge of how people learn, and what conditions promote what kinds of learning. With an ELC, we have a vehicle to at once apply new ideas in a flexible setting, and generate new knowledge from our experience and evaluation.

In discussing some of the changes occurring in higher education (new formats, new students, new expectations and demands), Brown (p. 19) returns us to the need for coping institutionally, professionally, and programatically with change:

> These changes could involve the reshaping of what college life --the typical collegiate environment, in any case--will be like for many persons being exposed to a college education. This is a challenge that is going to require more than a restructuring of student personnel roles and techniques; it is going to necessitate a reconceptualization of how student development occurs and how it can be enhanced in different environments and through different experiences than those in a traditional on-campus setting.

The idea of an Experiential Learning Center appears to be just such an example of recent reconceptualization of how student development occurs, and it offers many of the new environments and experiences which will enhance the university's offerings, whether on or off campus.

Among the suggestions Brown offers for curriculum changes is one for varying course experiences (p. 20): "more work-study courses, more time away from the campus, more foreign study. . .The idea that students may gain valuable educational insights through work experiences with community resource persons and even from each other represent major changes from the traditional classroom-lecture-exam sequence." Though these are not strictly student personnel concerns, they are part of the concern with student development in all areas, and therefore become of interest to student affairs professionals in their educative orientation. Again, the ELC can be a vehicle for the development and management of this kind of learning experience. There is an added benefit of community liaison, which serves positive functions for all concerned--community, students, and perception of the university as a whole. Town and gown meet once again--though the ELC may foster more jeans than gowns!

As a practical consideration, the ELC has the additional appeal of being able to be largely self-supporting through its class registration fees, which can be established to meet the program's direct costs, while still maintaining a level within the typical student's budget.

Without belaboring the point, it seems that the connection between student affairs philosophy and programming, and ELC goals and rationale is a good one. Both traditional professional orientations and newer student development orientations are well-served through the medium of ELC programming. Some of the kinds of programs useful in communicating and actualizing the philosophy were touched on in the rationale outline and subsequent discussion, but the possibilities are worth a closer look.

What kinds of programs can be part of an Experiential Learning Center?

The most immediate answer to this question, to many people, stems from the roots already mentioned in the Outward Bound program, which is primarily outdoor-oriented. OB programs offer training and challenge in a variety of environments to groups as diverse as junior high school students and high-ranking executives. (Colorado State University's President, A.R. Chamberlain participated in an Outward Bound river trip on the Green River in Utah in July 1973! "I am convinced it was one of the better experiences which I have had the privilege to have. . .and it give /sic/ me an opportunity to see another avenue for incorporating a special learning situation into some of our own University human capital development efforts. I consider the time invested in this Outward Bound experience to have been very worthwhile. . . .During the coming months I will spend more time talking with my campus people about possible programs that might contribute specifically to certain efforts of the institution."--from an August 1, 1973 letter to Joseph Nold, Director, Colorado Outward Bound School) This kind of program is often described as "adventure-based education"--"A highly experiential learning concept functioning as a variety of characteristic problem-solving tasks set in a prescribed physical and social environment which impel the participants to mastery of these tasks which in turn serves to reorganize the

meaning and direction of their life experience"(Walsh and Golins in Gager, p. 2). Programs organized around this concept can take almost innumerable forms in a variety of environments: wilderness, mountains, rivers, cities, sea, desert, etc. They can be structured for different groups--men, women, high school or college students, probably even healthy senior citizens, and the length of time of the program or course can be varied as well. OB currently offers a range of from 3 to 28 days, and special contract courses can be designed and run upon request.

Gager describes two other applications of the experiential education philosophy: "cultural journalism" and "craftsmanship education". Cultural journalism, probably best exemplified by the Foxfire program, and described by Eliot Wigginton in Moments, the Foxfire Experience (1975), is "a functional, experience-based learning concept possessing a demonstrated capacity to use creatively the inherent talents of. . .youth. . . ./It/ involves students with extensive interviewing of human resources in their communities, often members of the oldest generation, and from the. . .materials thus collected, they document the wisdom and capture the essence of their own cultural heritage" (Gager, p. 2). A fascinating way to cut through the age segregation of much of today's youth that was mentioned earlier. Craftsmanship education is "an experiential approach to the concept of 'craftsmanship'--a spirit comprised of the care, verve and pride of achievement of the individual, qualities brought about by the art, the skill and demands of materials and the process thereof" (p. 2). While Gager was referring primarily to the philosophy of the Apprenticeshop in Bath, Maine, where students build wooden boats, the process can be the same in any arts and crafts program. The transformation of material from one form into another is rich ground for experiential learning:

> Maybe that's the driving attraction to the creative process, this fighting back, this assembling from total randomness, wood grain grown at the whims of nature, carefully appraised and redirected into an extremely complex and ordered form. There is nothing more random than a tree, nothing more unrandom than a wooden boat (from an Apprenticeshop student's journal, Gager, p. 14).

Another program orientation can be the whole realm of non-traditional, alternative, "free-university"-type offerings. Typically these include project or skill-oriented courses, leisure-time activities, self-development, recreation, exercise, and applied idea or philosophical courses, to mention a few.

Volunteer and community service activities are often mentioned as valuable experiential learning opportunities. For example, Bucknell University runs an extensive "service-learning" program of volunteer community activity which students and community alike appear to value highly.

Many of these content and format items can be combined in a leadership training program--another experiential project with valuable applications for college students. The paraprofessional program for student workers would fit here. Travel/Study/Work programs are sometimes included. Schools with 4-1-4 academic calendars can offer the interim time for concentrated experience-based programs. Summer programming is popular and offers special attractions for outdoor events. The list can go on and on. An important aspect of the ELC is its flexibility to meet a variety of needs, and its availability as a forum and testing ground for new ideas.

A program with such a range of possibilities needs a location that complements it both philosophically and physically. The program needs to be both visible and accessible in order to maintain its momentum and to spark new curiosity within the university community. If the program is part of the student affairs division, what subunit is generally most readily adaptable to the needs and goals of an ELC?

Where should the Experiential Learning Center be housed? Why?

Although many student affairs areas develop and offer programs, one of the most visible and consistent sources of educational, cultural, and recreational programming is the Student Center, the "livingroom of the college"--to quote ACU-I's "College Unions: Fifty Facts" (1975). The Association of College Unions-International has developed a statement of the purposes and functions of the student union, which states in part:

> The union is part of the education program of the college. As the center of college community life, it serves as a laboratory of citizenship, training students in social responsibility and for leadership in our democracy. Through its various boards, committees and staff, it provides a cultural, social, and recreational program aiming to make free time activity a cooperative factor with study in education. In all its processes it encourages self-directed activity, giving maximum opportunity for self-realization and for growth in individual social competency and group effectiveness. Its goal is the development of persons as well as intellects.

This is not a new statement. It was first adopted in 1956, and it was reaffirmed in 1964. Its spirit remains vital today, as well. Certainly this is consistent with the goals and objectives of both the overall student affairs division and the ELC. The educational contribution of the Student Center/Union is often overlooked in considerations of that organization's functions on campus. It is easily regarded as a meeting site, a place to get a snack, play pool, see a movie; but it is also a place to see an art exhibit, hear a nationally-known speaker, listen to an avant-garde concert, make a silver bracelet, throw a pot, cast a chart, tie a fly, fly a handmade kite, or read a book. J.S. Sturgell's "An Uncommon Guide to College Union Programming" (1974) lists some sixty topics under Arts and Crafts courses either currently or recently offered by programs in his study of student union programming. The "Discovery" category dealt with a variety of topics from Africa to Computer Programming to Herbs to Oceanic Wilderness Exploration to

Yoga--with seventy other topics in between. "Hobbies, Sports and Physical Activity" included thirty-five areas from Archery to Furniture Making to Ski-Touring to Tennis. "Consumer Interests", "Languages", "Dance", "Music", "Group Experiences", and "Careers" were other areas which included nearly a hundred topic possibilities within them. Most of the examples of possible short courses included an experiential element in their orientation or presentation.

In his "Foreword" (p. 3-1) Sturgell lists some "union musts" for programming activities. They include enhancing classroom offerings through complementary programs, relating to environmental and world concerns through greater cultural and artistic communication, and using the union facilities to optimum advantage. Sturgell also feels we should "help program participants to have more fun. . . .Americans have never been very good at relaxed sheer enjoyment." Union programming should "provide opportunities for service and leadership so that students can 'turn on', help each other, and also participate in activities involving social responsibility." And finally, but not least of all, it is a "must" to "help various groups satisfy personal desires to learn something basic (and sometimes by doing in contrast to the abstraction of the classroom) in the pursuit of the arts and crafts or interests of an avocational or practical nature."

No other unit within the typical student affairs division has the facilities or the philosophy or the expertise to offer an experiential learning program as effectively as the Student Center. To offer the same program elsewhere in the division or in the University would involve a greater development of staff and support systems than is necessary in the Student Center, which normally has an established base of programming staff and facilities.

So far, this discussion has dealt with all the positive, productive elements of developing an ELC. As with any innovative, somewhat untried idea, there are questions, fears, and cautions to be dealt with. There are valid criticisms which need to be taken into account in program planning and implementation. The next few paragraphs will attempt to cover some of the possible areas of concern for a young and growing ELC.

Are there any problems or limitations to be aware of in setting up and running such a program? Criticisms?

There are at least two categories of issues to be aware of in running a program of this kind. One is the philosophical reservations some members of the university community may harbor about the impact of such a program. Traditional modes of education and traditional educational philosophy may stand in the way of acceptance by both faculty and students. These attitudes might give rise to problems in generating interdisciplinary interest and support, important factors in the ELC's ability to achieve its goals. The other category is the list of concrete problems to be handled in conjunction with program development. Worth noting as a caution against overzealous pursuit of ELC goals are the limitations inherent in a program of this kind--there are things we can't and shouldn't try to do. On the other hand, there are myriad possibilities of what can be done, and ideas should never be scrapped just because they are untried.

Harold Howe (1974) has identified some areas of criticism of experiential learning. One is "that introduction of experience outside the school or college on a mass basis is impractical from an economic viewpoint" (p.9). It is true that experience-based learning can be expensive in terms of staff (low teacher/student ratio), time (it takes longer to learn by doing), and equipment (river rafts and photolab machinery, for example, are not inexpensive

items). While we stress that anyone can benefit from experiential learning opportunities, there is no accompanying drive to enlist the whole student body. A key element of the program's appeal is the voluntary nature of individual participation. The existence of the personal motivation to become involved in an ELC offering is an important step toward that offering having the desired impact on the student. Since voluntarism is the key to the ELC's approach, mass education is effectively excluded. Also, the nature of experiential education programming does not have absolutely universal appeal or identification. No vast percentage of a university's student body is likely to seek participation in the program at any given time, no matter how appealing the individual offerings. Student interests and time commitments are simply too varied for this to be much of an issue for this kind of program.

Howe's second criticism (p. 9) is that an "emphasis [on] experience is anti-intellectual and should be either avoided or adopted with great care." Anti-intellectualism is taking Williamson's point about dealing with the whole individual to an absurd extreme. Because concern is expressed with factors <u>other</u> than pure intellect, does not mean that the world of ideas is ignored. On the contrary, it is this element which enables effective application of what is learned from experience to other, future situations. Whole people are intellect <u>plus</u> other areas equally deserving of attention and development. Certainly care should be taken in this or any enterprise to seek a balance between ideas and experience. Extremes are seldom productive in human pursuits of any kind.

Other concerns for the ELC include staffing, management, training, budgeting, community and public relations, program planning and implementation and so on. These and other issues deserve greater attention.

Basic to the success of the ELC will be effective leadership and staffing. Much of what follows will be dependent upon the credibility, commitment, and energy of the program's leaders. They should have an understanding of program philosophy, well-developed communication and human relations skills, organizational and management ability, and experience with the kinds of programs offered by the Center. Energy, flexibility, and creativity are other important characteristics.

Resources are always important to evaluate, and they can take several forms--human, monetary, environmental, and facility resources come to mind immediately. Human resources means teachers from the university faculty, the student body, and the community. It means volunteer staff, it means those who can be turned to for information and referral and support, and perhaps most of all it means the ones for whom all the work is being done--the students who take the courses.

Monetary resources include registration fees, program support or subsidy, outside sources of funding, and materials and equipment inventory.

Environmental and facility resources are vital because that is where the program happens--classroom, river, gymnasium, mountainside, studio, desert, and so on. Knowing what's around, within and outside of the immediate community is crucial for program planning. Who has kitchen facilities for a cooking class? A wood floor for exercise or dance classes? A track for bicycles? What hiking trails are within a manageable radius? A resource survey is an important step in developing the ELC program.

Another concern worth addressing as a management issue is that of insurance coverage. The ELC needs an accurate understanding of the extent to which the University's umbrella policy covers it, and the special situations for which separate arrangements are needed. This is an area that cannot be

ignored. Lawsuits for injury, damages, negligence, or other causes can seriously harm a program that has not dealt beforehand with the possibilities.

Public relations is one of the areas in which the ELC seeks to enhance the University's position in the community. Two avenues exist for the ELC in this regard. One is the quality and extent of outreach in publicizing and making available the Center's classes and programs. The second area, which is based somewhat on the first, is coordination with other community-based agencies which are offering or may wish to offer similar events to see that duplication is minimized and the best possible use is made of all resources available to the various groups. Philosophically, community education is and should continue to be a broad area in which several programs, even similar ones, can coexist peacefully through their appeal and/or service to slightly differing segments of the population. While the ELC's main thrust should be aimed at the university community, special benefits accrue to all participants through the involvement of a variety of people from different areas, of different ages and backgrounds, with different skills and experiences to share. Communication on an open and on-going basis among all education-oriented agencies can lead to a productive sense of shared goals, and may facilitate cooperative programming to the benefit of everyone involved. Lack of this kind of communication engenders empire-building and protectiveness, confusion, and needless overlap and duplication.

Another, but by no means the last, concern is that of administrative and faculty commitment to the ELC concept and program. To offer this kind of opportunity to the community requires supportive backup of more than just the program staff and more than money. There needs to be a sense of commitment to the goals and philosophy of the program on the part of the division

as a whole. Awareness of the ELC program on the part of both faculty and administration can greatly enhance the diversity of offerings through these people's participation, and the possible negative attitudes mentioned at the beginning of this discussion can be much more easily dispelled.

Another way to insure credibility and disarm criticism is to be able to demonstrate that you are achieving what you intended to do. In the case of experiential learning, where the outcomes are individualized and very personal, this can be a particularly difficult task. A few educators have made suggestions that can help to evaluate both the program and its impact.

What about assessment and evaluation--how do you know if you're doing what you set out to do?

In order to discuss assessment of an ELC program, it is necessary to return for a moment to the statement of its goals to see what has been put forth as a standard of achievement. For individuals, primary emphasis is placed on personal growth, and that can take several forms. Enhanced self-concept, recognition of individual needs, values clarification, coping with stress, improvement of interpersonal relations, and development of a sense of community are some of the outcomes sought. As a learning center that is part of the university, there are program goals to be met in addition to meeting the above student needs. The primary of these goals is the provision of alternative, experientially-based opportunities for learning. Fostering attitudes of responsibility, campus orientation, and commitment and participation in human problem solving is also important. Feedback is needed in the areas of instruction and organization or management as well, if improvements are to be continually made in the running of the program.

Two questions must be answered by and through the approach to evaluation related to the individual. How does one estimate personal growth? What do experiential education programs accomplish? The rationale is based on the

hypothesis that personal growth is often fostered through experiential education programs, but more information is needed about the relationship between the two. The objectives help define what growth is to be encouraged. Evaluation of the growth depends on the determination of actions or behaviors on the part of students which can be observed by the teachers and which indicate that the desired growth is occurring. An example of one objective and the behavioral indicators associated with meeting it shows the specificity of the language and actions required (McKean et al, 1975, p.2).

> OBJECTIVE: Students will demonstrate a problem-solving approach to tasks.
>
> behavioral indicators: (as evidenced by)
> - searching for solutions from within the group, and not from the instructor
> - arriving at a group solution to a problem
> - deciding upon a number of varied solutions to a problem

Developing measurable objectives, and defining behavioral indicators of objective-achievement then, is most of the process in evaluating the personal growth aspect of experiential education.

Program goals can be similarly evaluated by formulating objectives and possible observable outcomes and weighing the degree of success experienced in meeting the goals.

Organizational/instructional evaluation is an easier matter, and can be handled by having students and staff (teachers) fill out a simple questionnaire. A goal might be that the registration process will be efficient and accurate. If students must wait in line no longer than 15 minutes and have equal and easy access to class information, that objective will have been met. Student reaction to instructors is important, for it will determine in large part whether those students continue to participate in program offerings, and whether they recommend the program to others. Program coordinators may also

wish to observe instructors, devising behavioral indicators for them as well as students. After staff orientation and training, it might be an objective that instructors will encourage and permit students to assume some responsibility for their own learning and intellectual values. An instructor who is observed to present areas for exploration by students, with expectations of individual effort can be said to meet this objective. Part of the training effort for instructors should be help in developing instructional tactics which will facilitate the achievement of both the program and the student-oriented objectives. McKean et al (p. 11) propose three such approaches: 1) modeling, 2) contiguity, and 3) reinforcement. Modeling is simply "practicing what you preach". Behavior that is easy to imitate, and models that are credible are the key here. Contiguity tactics involve "arranging positive conditions in the learning environment so that they will be associated by the learner with the affective behavior sought." Reinforcement involves using positive reactions or stimuli or removing aversive stimuli once the student exhibits a desired behavior.

Evaluation is a pervasive element in program implementation. All aspects of the effort can and should be subject to scrutiny. Mechanics, logistics, policies and procedures; student outcomes; instructional content, format, and delivery; and even our educational philosophies need rational appraisal and either affirmation or change based on the results.

What is done with the results of the various evaluations has important implications for the future of the program. It can be expected that asking for ideas and feedback from the diverse population in the program will generate new avenues of exploration. Constant awareness of the state-of-the-art in educational theory and practice can suggest other kinds of approaches appropriate to the goals and objectives of the ELC. Perhaps even new goals

will emerge through conscientious growth and development and program improvement. Besides this kind of concern, there are other possibilities for the ELC's future--let us explore some of them.

What about the future?

The future of the ELC is anyone's guess. There are trends in motion now which could greatly enhance its appeal and growth over the years; but some of the very same trends could spell its demise.

Changes in the future will depend first of all on the basic decision of whether or not to pursue program growth and expansion. If growth is not an option, the appeal and need for the program can still be expected to continue, and energy can be directed toward improved quality and efficiency at some agreed-upon level of operation. A danger, of course, is that the choice not to grow will lead to stagnation and loss of vital energy and motivation.

Programs of any kind, however, seem naturally to seek growth. The ELC is no exception, and planned expansion has implications in at least three major areas: content, management/staffing, and target populations. Each of these encompasses a number of issues. Program content is affected by growth in terms of both number and type of classes or experiences offered; and it is affected by decisions on direction of growth. One viable option for many similar programs is the availability of academic credit for participation. This is a valid concern, particularly if the goals of greater ties with academic areas and quality instruction and evaluation are implemented. The ELC is often used as a trial area for an accreditable course to "get the bugs out," or by someone with expertise but no academic credentials to share self-gained knowledge. Both efforts could be deserving of credit for successful participation by students.

Growth in numbers of people involved in the program both as teachers and as students will necessitate more sophisticated policies, procedures, and support staff. In short, growth will generate a bureaucracy of sorts, with attending demands for effective management and coordination. Instructional staff will also be affected by program growth. A greater mix may develop of credentialed and non-credentialed people; new expectations for quality and commitment can emerge from continued dedication to and education about the ELC's philosophy. An unfortunate by-product for both students and staff could be a degree of depersonalization, regardless of the program's dedication to serving the individual.

If more people become involved in ELC program participation, who will they be? Certainly university students are the main target, but the composition of that group may be changing to include older, returning women and men. It may also include those with a non-traditional approach to their own education. Houle (Keeton, p. 31) identified four kinds of new learners:

a) people who gained their experience before they acquired their theory and who have learned the latter inductively, if at all;
b) those individuals who prefer to guide their own learning or whose pattern of life requires such self-direction;
c) people who want guided but personalized programs of study, usually including experiential learning; and
d) a vast and heterogeneous collection of people, each of whom wants to compile a record of previous learning. . . into the basis for further study for a degree, believing that in this synergistic process the whole of their knowledge will become greater than the sum of its parts.

Melvin Tumin (Keeton, p. 48) describes six groups of people for whom experiential learning may be a valid option, and they include many more than the traditional 18-22 year old group. They also imply a greater outreach into the community at large--a growth trend which may be philosophically defensible, but which needs careful handling for all agencies involved.

> One can think of six groups of people for whom some version of experiential learning might therefore provide an opportunity to learn things not learned and to learn things well that might otherwise be learned poorly: all those who succeed relatively well in school by traditional criteria; those who fail, relatively speaking; those who drop out early for one reason or another; those who are bored even if successful; those who are not in school but want to continue growing; and those who are not now in school but want to return. It does not take much acuity to see that these six groups embrace large numbers of our people. Surely, then, there is a solid rationale for experiential learning if it is designed to improve and augment the learning and the lives of so many people. All other things being equal, any part of that complex task is worth trying.

Growth can be a positive, exciting, challenging process for a program like the ELC. It can also cause it to become cumbersome, unfeeling, and stagnant. Economic trends that encourage people to make practical use of their leisure time may also limit the discretionary income available to pursue this kind of activity. Growth is a loaded issue which must be handled with sensitivity and vision and common sense--it need not be a shibboleth.

SUMMARY

Experiential education is a process of whole-person education, based on active participation by the learner in the learning situation. These situations are structured to promote a number of desired outcomes which are always centered on the individual learner's personal combination of needs, capabilities, and goals.

Experiential education has been with us for a very long time, but has its contemporary roots notably in the philosophy of John Dewey and the teaching and organizational work of Kurt Hahn.

In an age of vastly expanded knowledge and concomitant specialization, much is left out of the learning experiences routinely accessible to people

of all ages. Some of these things are not readily available in other social or educational systems or structures. Either they are no longer a given as part of growing up, or they are new ideas or environments not previously existing. There is a need to fill in the gaps; to educate for change; for greater leisure competency; for freer, more self-actualizing people; for increased environmental and human awareness. Experiential education can make unique contributions to all of these.

There are a number of personal and institutional priorities which combine with the goals, objectives and processes of experiential learning to form a comprehensive rationale for the development of an experiential learning center. Individual growth outcomes are of paramount importance, but institutional goals of service to the public seeking alternative approaches to education are also served. The process of experiential education is consciously designed to foster positive results for students, community, and university.

As professionals committed to student development, student personnel administrators are particularly well-suited philosophically and institutionally to implement an experiential learning program. They have at their command a variety of resources both in terms of academic background and in diversity of services rendered. As an area of administration with a strong program orientation, student affairs can accommodate experimental, non-traditional education efforts much more readily than any other university entity.

Examples of the types of possible offerings within the ELC include outdoor and survival education, cultural journalism, craftsmanship education, and a variety of avocational, leisure-time activities. Volunteer and community service, or "service-learning" opportunities can also be made available

through the ELC. Travel/study/work and paraprofessional programs are other possibilities. It is important to note that the list is virtually inexhaustible. Options can be as varied as the energy and imagination of the people who make the program work.

Within the student affairs division, there is one physical and organizational structure that is especially well-suited to house the experiential learning program, and that is the Student Center or Union. It possesses many of the facilities in greatest demand by ELC programs, and its student and professional staff is likely to be the most adaptable to ELC functions of any division area. In addition, the Student Center is a focal point of campus activity, giving ELC programming visibility and accessibility available nowhere else.

As a non-traditional program, the ELC may encounter reservations on the part of academically-oriented staff and students which inhibit and interdisciplinary interest and support vital to the program's success. As a program which offers a wide range of activities to virtually all comers, the ELC must take care to keep communication open with other groups and agencies which offer similar programs to encourage cooperation rather than competition. Resource evaluation is crucial to ELC program implementation as the availability or lack of certain facilities, environments, or funds will impose limitations on what can reasonably be offered to participants. Insurance coverage is an issue to be examined in developing the ELC, as many classes will involve a degree of risk for which the ELC staff, Student Center, and university should be covered.

Evaluation of all aspects of the ELC is important both to the program's improvement (learning from its own experience) and its credibility within the educational and outside communities. Elements subject to evaluation include

the outcomes for individual students--their satisfaction and personal growth as a result of participation; outcomes for teachers--their personal and instructional development; and outcomes for the program itself--is it meeting the needs of its target populations in a productive and efficient way.

Information on how things are going in the present will necessarily, if we're responsible about the reasons for evaluation, lead to changes for the future. Careful thought and planning is crucial to ELC success. Unmanaged growth can kill the program as surely as smug satisfaction with the status quo. Special attention needs to be paid to trends in higher education--in learning theory, philosophy, population shifts, new types of students with new needs, economic indicators, and even social and political events as they impact public attitudes toward education. If we are educating for change, we must also plan for change.

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